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## ➤BOOK ❖ NOTICES.◀

### A HISTORY OF THE HEBREWS.\*

This work, the production of a typically painstaking Württemberg scholar, seems to point to a new departure in the attempts at the restatement of Israel's religious development on the basis of a critical readjustment of the sources. Over against the efforts of Wellhausen, Stade, Kuenen, Ed. Meyer, and others, which are all destructive of the traditional views and which aim at a reconstruction of Old Testament history more or less naturalistic, the work of Kittel seeks to be critical and just, and at the same time it reaches conclusions that are, on the whole, conservative in character. As it is a history of the Hebrews and not of the Israelites, it treats the chosen people as an oriental nation, and not primarily as the people of God. But nationally, the religious element, even from this standpoint, must constitute the leading element in their national character and history. A large portion of the book is devoted to the proper understanding of the sources. The contents of the different documents of the Pentateuch are given separately, and thus the student has the means of studying the different characteristics of each. This is the unique feature of the work and the one that makes it especially valuable for those who would thoroughly study the Pentateuchal problem in its historical aspects. We know of no other work which can be compared to Kittel's in this regard.

In his examination of these sources, Kittel surprises the reader constantly by his careful and discriminating judgment. Although himself a critic of critics in principle, he weighs the evidences and finds that, in not a few particulars, the literary basis of the radical reconstruction is without foundation. He, too, joins the ranks of those who deny the post-exilic origin of the Levitical system and he thus takes away the very foundation of the Wellhausen scheme. He regards the leading data of the Pentateuch as well attested by evidences as acceptable to the historical specialist as are the leading facts of Greek and Roman history, and among these historically attested facts, is that of the divine factor in the origin of Old Testament religion.

An additional feature which makes this a handy text-book for students, is that the author everywhere gives a clear account of the problems in dispute and has copious references to the leading works in which the special and yet debatable problems are discussed.

We are far from pronouncing the work perfect, or of claiming that its historical scheme is the final one which fair criticism must reach. Its chief usefulness lies in the fact that it offers good and abundant material for a close study of the problem and that it enables the reader to make the best use possible of these materials. It is also an interesting volume in showing that the principles of

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\* GESCHICHTE DER HEBRAER. Von R. Kittel, I Halbband: Quellenkunde und Geschichte bis zum Tode Josuas. Gotha: *Friedrich Andreas Perthes*. 1888.

historical criticism, when fairly applied, do not call for the radical views of the Wellhausen school. In our conviction, Kittel, too, although regarding the leading data of the Pentateuch as historical and the central thoughts of its religion inspired, yields more than fairness and necessity demand. But his work is a departure in the right direction, namely, in his attempt to re-state the facts of Israel's religious development on the bases of objective historical criticism, and not from the stand-point of subjective philosophical speculation.

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### DELITZSCH ON THE PSALMS.\*

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This most valuable of commentaries is before us again in a new and beautiful form. It is not too much to say that there is no living exegete who has entered so completely and so truly into the spirit of the Hebrew Psalter as has Professor Delitzsch. His commentary has had an eventful history. Issued first in 1859-60, a second edition appeared in 1867, a third in 1873, and a fourth in 1883. The present translation has been made from an interleaved copy of the last edition, with the author's latest additions and corrections in manuscript.

Although it must be granted that there is no commentary on the Psalter equal to this, two criticisms may be suggested: (1) that the matter is not sufficiently condensed; surely the same material could be given without loss in one-third less space; and (2) that the matter is not systematically arranged. There is a constant mixture of Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Latin, Greek, quotations, paraphrases, wonderfully deep spiritual expressions, exceedingly dry philological statements which to any but a professional scholar will seem confusing and disturbing. If the American edition could have been edited, the whole matter condensed into two-thirds of the space now occupied, and one-third of the material remaining consigned to foot-notes, the edition would have been incomparable. But from it as it now stands, one will get a clearer insight into the meaning of the Psalms, a firmer grasp of their teachings, than from any other source.

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\* COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS. By Professor Franz Delitzsch, D. D., of Leipzig. From the latest edition specially revised by the author in three volumes. Vol. 1. Translated by the Rev. David Eaton, M. A., and Rev. James E. Dügaid. New York: *Funk & Wagnalls*, Astor Place. 12mo, pp. 513. Price, \$2.00.